

# WINE... SOMEWHERE BEYOND THE SEA

BY MARTHA POWELL

As though inspired by Bobby Darin's words, "watch as the ships that go sailing....," this November a group of wine lovers will board Holland America Line's *ms Westerdam* to sip, swirl and sail to the Southern Caribbean. There, waiting onboard, is a pallet of award-winning regional wine from the states of New Mexico, Nebraska and Texas. Wine Makers Cruise III will again taste, tour and toast!

How did this cruise idea get started? Back in 2008, my husband, travel industry veteran Keith, and I joined with Holland America Line to take their Wine Makers Group concept to a new dimension by inviting winemakers from regional wineries onboard. We wanted it to be a triple win: a win for the guests who could experience a variety of these regional wines, a win for the wineries to gain exposure to wine lovers from other states who may not have the opportunity to visit the winery and a win for a non-profit organization. We currently take a portion of the proceeds from each cruise to benefit the New Mexico Cancer Center Foundation and The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Launching the first Wine Makers Cruise in 2009, we invited Jerry and Lynda Burd from New Mexico's Black Mesa Winery along with Jim and Sharon Shaw of Soaring Wings of Nebraska. With a group of wine-loving guests and award-winning regional wines, the *ms Eurodam* visited Half Moon Cay, San Juan and Grand Turk. The cruise was bound for success; not just a great vacation, but a grape vacation.

In 2010, onboard the *ms Oosterdam*, the wines were again "gran vino" with an itinerary of the Mexican Riviera. The Wine Makers Cruise II departure added two new components: an additional winery, making for three winemakers onboard, plus guest Chef Jacques Campbell from Oregon. The wineries onboard were Black Mesa Winery, James Arthur Vineyard of Nebraska and Cap\*Rock Winery of Texas. There were plenty of premium wines for all to enjoy.

This year, Wine Makers Cruise III departs November 13 from Ft. Lauderdale and sails to Half Moon Cay, Oranjestad, Aruba and Curacao. By popular demand, we will have the wine makers of Black Mesa Winery, James Arthur Vineyard and Cap\*Rock Winery. Always working to make each year's experience even better, we are adding new port experiences to the cruise. This year at our pre-cruise hotel in Ft. Lauderdale, we will have a "Port of Ft. Lauderdale Tasting," where our Chef will host a wine pairing with the wines, choice cheeses and delicious chocolates. Cruise guests Erica and Richard Hart, wine makers of Vino del Corazon Winery of Santa Fe, will offer the featured wine. Truly a delicious treat and a great way to kick off this week of wine appreciation at sea. In addition, we will be adding a Port experience onboard. Our winemakers will be sharing some Port wine with guests!

Why these wineries? We choose different regions so that guests can taste the different styles of wines offered. As New Mexicans, we are familiar with the great wines made here in the Land of Enchantment. We know each of the winemakers onboard and admire their dedication to their craft. Guests will have the opportunity to "wine and dine" and interact with them more intimately than if they just

visited the winery for a tasting. We have repeat cruisers who keep coming back just to be with these winemakers. Guests come from across the United States and depart the cruise with a better appreciation of all the state wines represented.

The winemakers have the opportunity to share their passion of wine not only with guests but with their fellow winemakers. While onboard, our guest Chef shares with guests wine pairing ideas and culinary suggestions from the islands we are visiting. Fun sessions are held to get to know the winemakers and other guests. Exclusive wine tastings are held in the Culinary Arts Center onboard. A private, exquisite lunch is held in The Pinnacle Grill, beautifully appointed with fine china, Riedel stemware and Frette linens. The menu is paired in advance with the winemakers' choice of their wines making this meal a *pièce de résistance* for guests to enjoy.

The year 2012 will bring yet another new experience, as we are forming a Wine Makers European River Cruise. While we won't be featuring regional wines onboard, we do plan to have our regional winemakers share their "seasoned wine palate" with our group and enhance the wine appreciation experience as we visit wineries in Europe.

Our 2012 Wine Makers Cruise IV will also sail on Holland America. We have neighboring state wineries not able to sail this year who want to join in on the fun next year. Stay tuned for further information on both of these cruises.

The Wine Makers Cruise is pleased to be one of the prizes of the New Mexico Wine Growers Association Passport promotion.

Closing with Bobby Darin's line "happy we'll be... beyond the sea," we invite anyone who enjoys wine and wants to acquaint themselves with a unique wine experience to join us in November.

Find out more at [www.winemakerscruise.com](http://www.winemakerscruise.com)

*Martha and Keith Powell are the coordinators of this cruise and are affiliates of Ticket to Travel. With over 30 years in the travel industry, 12 years in fundraising and six years studying regional wines, this cruise takes the best of all these aspects to sea.*

